

Lesson 9 – Genesis 32-36

Text: Genesis 32-36

Main Characters: God, Jacob, Esau, Dinah, Shechem, Simeon, Levi, Rachel

Key Passages:

- Genesis 32:28 – Jacob’s name is changed to Israel for the first time.
- Genesis 35:9-12 – Jacob’s name is changed to Israel again; promises are repeated.

List: Twelve Sons of Jacob by Age (mother):

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|----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1.) Reuben (L) | 4.) Judah (L) | 7.) Gad (Z) | 10.) Zebulun (L) |
| 2.) Simeon (L) | 5.) Dan (B) | 8.) Asher (Z) | 11.) Joseph (R) |
| 3.) Levi (L) | 6.) Naphtali (B) | 9.) Issachar (L) | 12.) Benjamin (R) |

Main Storyline:

After making the covenant at Mizpah, Jacob continued on his way home. Jacob decided to send messengers to his brother, Esau, in order to make peace with him after 20 years of being separated (see Genesis 31:41). The messengers returned with news: Esau was coming to meet him, along with 400 men. Jacob immediately became distressed and worried, as he assumed that Esau was coming to kill him and plunder his goods. Jacob tried to save himself from Esau in three ways: he split his camp in two (Genesis 32:7-8), prayed to God (Genesis 32:9-12), and gave gifts to Esau (Genesis 32:13-21).

Jacob was going to sleep alone that night, sending his family to the other side of a brook. However, an angel came and wrestled with him until the morning came (see Hosea 12:4). While they fought, the angel touched Jacob’s hip in order to disable him (it became dislocated). In the morning, Jacob demanded a blessing from the angel. The angel gave him a new name, Israel, because he had “striven with God and with men, and [had] prevailed.” Jacob continued to limp on his bad leg.

It was not long after this that Jacob looked up and saw Esau approaching with his band of 400 men. He quickly divided up his children and their mothers, placing the maids and their children in the front, and his wives and their children in the back, preparing them to run away in case of an attack. However, when Esau got close, he ran up and hugged and kissed Jacob, desiring to make peace. Jacob offered gifts to Esau, which he eventually accepted, and the two brothers went their separate ways after reconciling. Jacob lived in the city of Shechem (in Canaan) while Esau returned to Mount Seir (Edom).

One day, Shechem, the prince of the city, became infatuated with Dinah, Jacob’s daughter and raped her. He later demanded that his father, Hamor, get her for his wife because he loved her so much. When Hamor came to ask Jacob and his sons for Dinah, they were very angry. The sons came up with an evil plan to get revenge. They told Hamor that they would only allow Dinah to be married if all the men of Shechem were circumcised. They agreed on the deal, and all of the men were circumcised. Three days later, while they were all still in pain, Simeon and Levi went into the city, killed all of the men, and plundered all of their goods as vengeance for their sister. Jacob was upset with his sons for this.

God told Jacob to go back to Bethel (the place where he had seen the ladder). There, the promises were repeated to him, and his name was changed (again) to Israel. Also, Rachel gave birth to her second son, Benjamin, but died during her labor. Reuben, the oldest son, later had an affair with Bilhah, Rachel’s maid (Jacob found out). Isaac died and was buried at the age of 180 by Jacob and Esau.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Trust in God and His promises; He can deliver us from man (Mark 10:28, Romans 8:31ff).
- 2.) Revenge must be left to God; we sin and cause problems taking it ourselves (Romans 12:19-21).